



So Many Choices

Choosing a Childbirth Class

For more information, see: *Pregnancy, Childbirth, and the Newborn* page 21, *The Simple Guide to Having a Baby* page 62.

Timing: It's usually best to sign up for classes early in your second trimester. Plan to enroll in classes that will end about two to five weeks before your due date, so all the information is still fresh in your mind.

Find out your options for classes:

Most hospitals offer childbirth preparation classes, newborn care classes and breastfeeding classes. To find an independent educator, check your phone book, do an Internet search, look in local parent-child focused magazines and newspapers, or check <http://www.icea.org>; <http://www.lamaze.org>; <http://www.bradleybirth.com>; <http://www.hypnobirthing.com>; or <http://www.birthingfromwithin.com>.

If you have a choice of classes, contact them and ask these questions:

- Who sponsors the classes? _____
- What is the instructor's background/training? _____
- What is the instructor's experience with birth? _____
- What is the instructor/agency's philosophy about birth? _____
- Does the instructor cover normal childbirth as well as complications? _____
- Does she cover all choices and include their pros and cons? _____
- What topics are covered in the class? _____

- Does she teach self-help comfort measures and natural childbirth techniques? _____
- Are pain medications covered? _____ Does she describe disadvantages and risks as well as advantages?

- Does the series cover postpartum adjustment, newborn care, and infant feeding? _____
- How are the classes scheduled: How many weeks is the class? _____ How long is each session? _____
- How much time is spent in lecture, and how much in practicing skills? _____
- What is the cost of the series? _____
- How many students are typically in a class? _____
- Is the instructor available to students by phone, e-mail, or in person for questions outside of class and after the series?

- Is there a reunion class after all the babies are born? _____

